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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0673
RUEHSL/USDAO BRATISLAVA LO IMMEDIATE
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WHERE IS SLOVAKIA ON MISSILE DEFENSE?

REF: A. 2007 BRATISLAVA 616

[B](#). 2007 BRATISLAVA 612

[C](#). 2007 BRATISLAVA 578

[D](#). 2007 BRATISLAVA 487

[1](#). (U) Slovak Minister of Economy Lubomir Jahndatek, a nominee of the PM's Smer-SD party, expressed concerns about US Missile Defense (MD) plans following a February 19 meeting with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Sergej Naryshkin in Bratislava. Jahndatek said "Every rational person knows this is a threat to us. We are in the middle of Poland and the Czech Republic. When those rockets fall somewhere it will have an impact also on Slovakia." Jahndatek added that "Slovakia has been left out of this process but we bear a risk in the event of an attack." FM Jan Kubis had his spokesperson, Jan Skoda, repudiate Jahndatek's remarks almost immediately and said they do not reflect government policy. Speaking on Slovak Radio the night of February 19, Skoda said the MFA considers Jahndatek's comments a reflection of his personal opinions. Skoda reaffirmed that Slovakia has appreciated the ability to take part in discussions on US MD plans at NATO, and will continue to do so.

[2](#). (SBU) Kubis repeated that message publicly and privately to Ambassador Obsitnik on February 20. Kubis told him on February 20 that Jahndatek had apologized for his "personal remarks" and was "ashamed." Kubis also reached out to Defense Minister Baska, who was similarly chagrined by Jahndatek's freelancing on a subject not under his purview. (Comment. We assume Jahndatek made his remarks because he was sitting next to Naryshkin. End comment.) Unfortunately, Kubis' efforts to highlight the official government line - that US MD plans will increase Slovakia's security - were overshadowed by PM Fico's decision to repeat his personal opposition during a February 20 press conference.

[3](#). (U) Fico described himself as "firmly against radars and rockets in Europe." Fico repeated that "Slovakia should have a voice in the discussion about European missile defense, and that the proper forum for that discussion is NATO." The PM added that "systems in neighboring countries (Poland and the Czech Republic) that are targeted by weapons from third countries (i.e. Russia) must cause Slovakia to feel threatened."

[4](#). (U) The PM's comments were made at very nearly the same time as Kubis was speaking with reporters elsewhere attempting to clarify the remarks made by Jahndatek the day before. In nearly the same words he has used to clarify the PM's comments against MD plans in the past, Kubis assured the press that Jahndatek had pronounced his personal opinion only.

The FM went somewhat further when he suggested that Jahnatek may have "been caught up in the atmosphere" after his meeting with the Russian Deputy Prime Minister. Kubis assured the press that, if it would be necessary, he would again clarify the official position of the Slovak Republic for its partners.

OBSITNIK